

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CAPE T 00420 220700Z  
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CPR-01 SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07  
NSAE-00 EUR-12 /049 W  
-----220703Z 034754 /10  
R 211600Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5850  
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0420

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, SF  
SUBJ: SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE TO U.S.  
DONALD BELL SOLE

REF: STATE 58564

1. NEITHER AMBASSADOR SOLE NOR HIS WIFE ARE PERSONALLY  
KNOWN TO U.S. OFFICERS PRESENTLY IN SOUTH AFRICA, BUT  
SOLE'S NAME HAS BEEN MENTIONED TO US FREQUENTLY AS ONE  
OF S.A.'S MOST CAPABLE SENIOR DIPLOMATS.

2. SOLE WAS BORN ON DECEMBER 13, 1917. HE RECEIVED HIS  
B.A. FROM RHODES UNIVERSITY IN 1937 AND M.A. IN 1938. A  
CAREER DIPLOMAT, HE JOINED THE SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN  
SERVICE IN 1938, AND HAS SERVED IN LONDON, AT THE UNITED  
NATIONS IN NEW YORK, AND AS SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR TO  
AUSTRIA. HE HAS BEEN AMBASSADOR TO THE FRG SINCE  
FEBRUARY 1969.

3. AMBASSADOR SOLE IS REGARDED BY HIS SOUTH AFRICAN  
COLLEAGUES AS ONE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S TOP CAREER  
DIPLOMATS. HE ENJOYS THE PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP AND  
CONFIDENCE OF PRIME MINISTER VORSTER. HIS NAME HAS  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CAPE T 00420 220700Z

BEEEN SUGGESTED AS THE LIKELY CANDIDATE TO SUCCEED  
BRAND FOURIE AS SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THE  
ONE "DRAWBACK" IS THAT HE IS FROM ENGLISH STOCK  
RATHER THAN AFRIKANER, AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION  
IN SELECTING CAREER OFFICERS FOR TOP POSITIONS IN  
SENSITIVE MINISTRIES. HIS NAME HAS BEEN MENTIONED  
FREQUENTLY BY PROFESSIONALS AS A LIKELY SUCCESSOR TO

AMBASSADOR BOTHA.

4. HE IS AN ACTIVE RATHER THAN PASSIVE DIPLOMAT, ALTHOUGH NOT QUITE OF THE SCOPE OF PIK BOTHA. HE TENDS TO BE MORE SELECTIVE IN FOCUS. IN GERMANY, FOR EXAMPLE, HE DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE EFFORT TO ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH NOTABLE SUCCESS. HE IS SAID TO HAVE CONCENTRATED HIS CONTACT WORK WITH THE BUSINESS, MILITARY AND OTHER CONSERVATIVE SECTORS TO THE NEGLECT OF MORE LIBERAL ELEMENTS WHO TEND TO BE CRITICAL. DEFENDING THE SOUTH AFRICAN IMAGE IS ANOTHER AREA WHERE HE CONCENTRATES ENERGIES. IN THIS FIELD HE HAS A TENDENCY TO OVER-REACT. ONE PERSON WHO IS FAMILIAR WITH HIS PERFORMANCE IN GERMANY SAYS THAT HE LOST EFFECTIVENESS BY RESPONDING TOO FREQUENTLY TO THINGS THAT MIGHT HAVE BETTER BEEN IGNORED.

5. DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS IN BONN HE HAS BEEN UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE BY GROUPS HOSTILE TO SOUTH AFRICA. DIFFICULTIES PEAKED IN MID-1975 WITH THE STEALING OF SENSITIVE EMBASSY FILES AND DISCLOSURE OF EMBASSY INVOLVEMENT IN A SURREPTITIOUS TRIP BY A GERMAN GENERAL TO SOUTH AFRICA. THIS COINCIDE WITH NEAR TRAGEDY IN HIS FAMILY INVOLVING HIS 19-YEAR OLD SON WHO HAS BEEN PARTIALLY PARALYZED AS A RESULT OF AN AUTO ACCIDENT. THROUGHOUT THIS PERIOD OF STRAIN, WE ARE TOLD, HE WAS ALWAYS ON THE FRINGE OF OVERDOING HIS RESPONSE TO CRITICISM BUT NEVER TO THE POINT OF NEGLECTING GOOD MANNERS. ONE SOURCE SAYS THAT

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CAPE T 00420 220700Z

HAD HE BEEN SERVED BY A BETTER INFORMATION OFFICER, HE COULD HAVE AVOIDED THIS CRITICISM.

6. AMBASSADOR SOLE IS KNOWN HERE AS A THOROUGHLY PROFESSIONAL, GENUINE AND RELIABLE DIPLOMAT. IF HE HAS A FAULT, IT SEEMS TO BE A TENDENCY TO TAKE CRITICISM TOO MUCH TO HEART AND TO REACT TOO QUICKLY. BONN MAY BE ABLE TO ADD GREATER PERSONAL INSIGHTS AND COMMENT. BOWDLER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE, BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 21-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977CAPET00420  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D770097-0508  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** CAPE TOWN  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1977/newtext/t19770340/aaaabioq.tel  
**Line Count:** 106  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** b1815cb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 77 STATE 58564  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 18-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 3052287  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE TO U.S. DONALD BELL SOLE  
**TAGS:** PDIP, PFOR, SF, US, GE, (SOLE, DONALD BELL)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/b1815cb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009